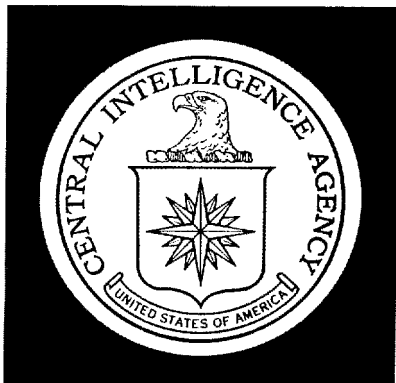


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

Swaziland Gains Independence

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SWAZILAND GAINS INDEPENDENCE

The Kingdom of Swaziland will gain independence from Britain on 6 September with greater prospects for success than most new African states have had. Power seems to be securely in the hands of an oligarchy of tribal rulers, social stability is nurtured by tribal homogeneity, and the country's economy is developing and moderately promising. Nonetheless, economic development depends upon a continued favorable policy toward whites--mostly from contiguous South Africa--who now control a significant share of the nation's wealth and natural resources. If economic growth continues, it may eventually undermine the current political stability, which is based on a respect for traditions. Moreover, the country's location inside white-ruled southern Africa may make Swaziland attractive as a base for those governments and other organizations bent on instigating hostile acts against the White Redoubt.

Tribal State

Swaziland is one of the few countries in black Africa that is a nation as well as a state. Over 90 percent of its small population (408,000) is Swazi, a tribally homogeneous people with a strong sense of identity and a time-honored social structure. Because of the devotion of most Swazi to their customs, political power remains overwhelmingly in the hands of the country's traditional rulers, the tribal leaders, who control the modern political institutions introduced by Britain in the early 1960s.

Under its constitution, Swaziland is a constitutional monarchy whose King, the Paramount Chief of the Swazi, has some powers of his own, the most

important being his position as trustee of the country's land and minerals. Otherwise, power legally resides in parliament. Most of its members are elected and the rest appointed by the King. The country's tribal leaders gained control of parliament through a clean sweep of both the 1964 and 1967 elections by the Imbokodvo Embalabala (meaning "tough grinding stone"), a political party of the tribal "establishment" represented by the King and his advisers--the Swazi National Council. Although Prime Minister Makhosini Dlamini formally is head of the party, real power, both in Parliament and the party, is in the hands of the traditional leadership.

Formed as a result of the initiative of university-trained King Sobhuza II only a few

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months prior to the first elections in 1964, the Imbokodvo initially cooperated with a now insignificant political party which represented local white economic interests to prevent longer established modernist African politicians from gaining control of the new government institutions. Shortly after it won the 1964 elections, however, the Imbokodvo began to assume a more nationalistic and modern stance. This was attributable to the remarkable up-to-date attitude of the revered 69-year-old King Sobhuza II as well as to the party's wish to deflate the political sails of the modernist opposition.

The Imbokodvo demanded the abolition of racially separate legislative seats and voters lists, parity of wages for black and white workers, more education and health facilities, no special guarantee of land ownership rights

to whites, and the ownership of all mineral rights by the Swazi nation. The Imbokodvo also began to establish youth groups and to bring the trade unions into a federation allied to the party.

Sobhuza welcomed back into the national fold (as he thinks of the Imbokodvo) those leaders of modernist parties who saw the hopelessness of opposition to the traditional establishment and who believed they could be more effective by liberalizing the policy of the traditional power structure from within. At the same time, the dominantly traditionalist Imbokodvo acquired an aura of respectability among some of the more radical African governments by having modernist politicians as members. Subsequently, those governments that had been aiding opposition parties within Swaziland either directly or through the Organization of African Unity (OAU) promised to



SOBHUZA, II
King of Swaziland



MAKHOSINI DLAMINI
Prime Minister

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stop, but the OAU made a contribution to an opposition party's election campaign in 1967. Some modernist politicians went on to win seats in parliament under the Imbokodvo banner in the 1967 elections and gained cabinet positions.

Meanwhile, the country's several modernist opposition parties remain weak, factional, poorly organized, inadequately financed, and ineffectually led. In the early 1960s they showed some promise of growth, commanding support from the infant trade unions and urban unemployed, and receiving financial support from external sources such as Ghana, Egypt, and the African Liberation Committee of the OAU. Their growth was stunted, however, by their own internal bickering and most of all by the formation in 1964 of the Imbokodvo which gave voice to the dominant conservatism of the population. As a result, all but one opposition party today is moribund. That party, the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress, is itself poorly organized, factional, partially drained of some promising leaders who went over to the Imbokodvo, and, perhaps most damaging for politicians in new states, out of power on the eve of independence.

The Economy

Swaziland is slightly smaller than New Jersey (6,704 sq. mi.), but it is relatively well endowed with natural resources. Prior to 1960 its min-

eral deposits--except for one of the world's largest asbestos mines--remained untapped, and its land was used primarily for grazing sheep and cattle. Today, however, Swaziland exports a variety of mineral and agricultural products including iron ore, sugar, wood pulp, citrus fruits, and some coal, as well as asbestos. The country's small modern economy is booming. Virtually all of the impetus for this recent surge in development has come from whites, most of whom are South Africans, and has occurred mainly on white-owned land.

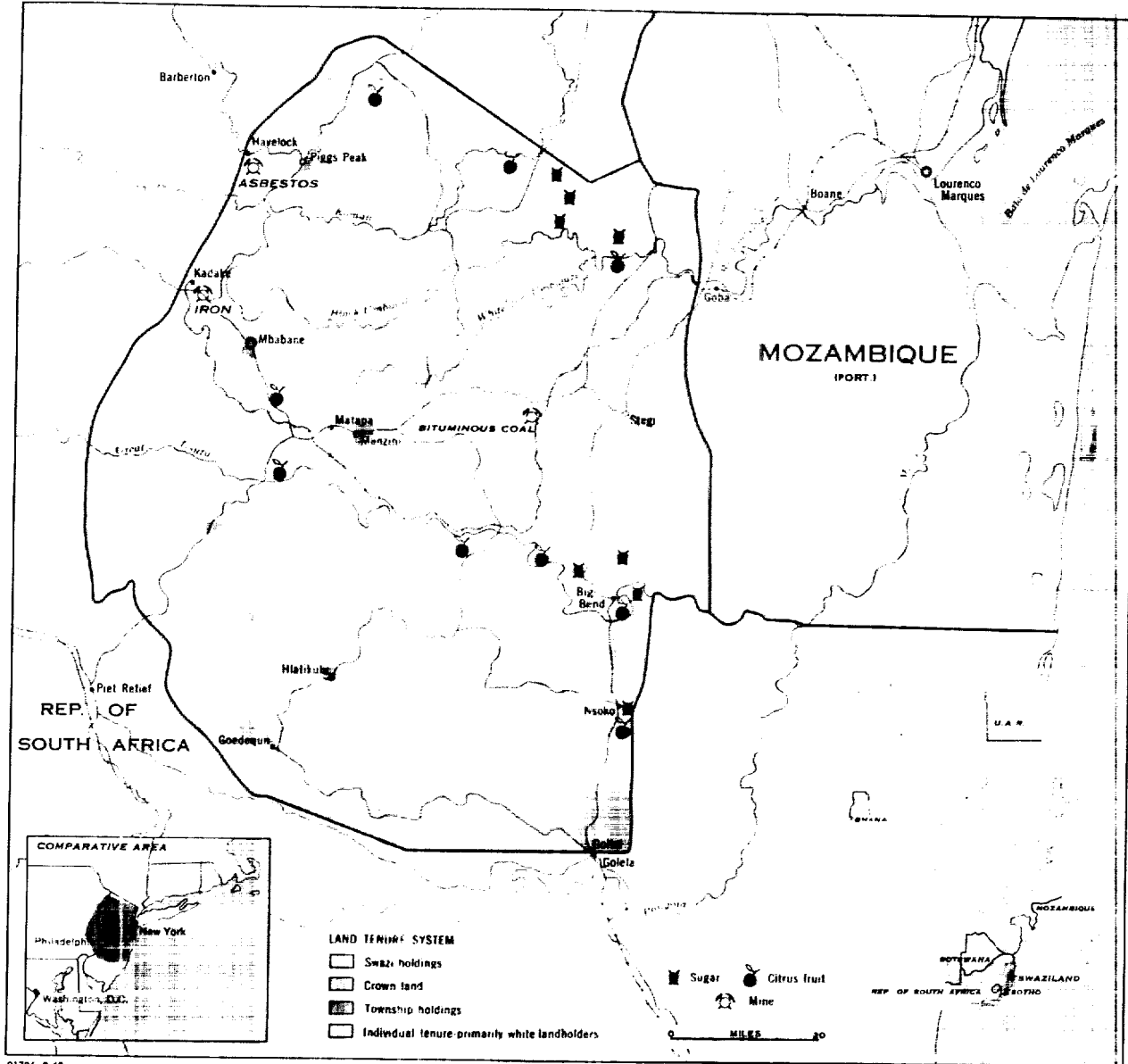
As the economy has grown, an increasing number of Swazi have moved into the money economy, a few as merchants and small freehold farmers but most as unskilled laborers. About 50,000 Swazi now earn regular wages in the local economy and an additional 30-40,000 find temporary employment either in Swaziland or South Africa. Over 70 percent of the population, however, still live as herdsman and subsistence farmers. As elsewhere in Africa, a major obstacle to the growth of commercial farming is the traditional system of tenure and land use. According to both tribal law and the country's modern constitution, the King and subordinate chiefs control the allocation and use of tribal lands.

The question of land tenure also poses potential difficulties for white freeholders, who own almost 45 percent of the land.

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Originally they held only concessionary rights, but when the British took over the administration of the country after the Boer War they reviewed all concession claims and partitioned the land between the whites and the Swazi. The Swazi have never accepted the legality of this settlement and are determined to change it after independence. How they will change it, however, is uncertain, but if they move too quickly and run the whites off of the land the whole economy could be undermined.

Foreign Policy

Swaziland's dominant foreign policy problem is to maintain good relations with neighboring South Africa and Portuguese Mozambique without stimulating other governments and organizations to intervene in order to carry out hostile acts against white-ruled southern Africa.

South Africa is particularly important; it buys about one fourth of Swaziland's exports, provides important banking, currency, and customs services, and employs sometimes as many as 20,000 Swazi workers, mostly in South Africa's gold mines. Most important, South Africans supply most of Swaziland's investment capital and managerial expertise. Swaziland's main trade route to the rest of the world is its South African-financed railroad which transits Mozambique to the port of Lourenco Marques.

These considerations have led Swaziland's present govern-

ment to a foreign policy not unlike that of similarly hostaged Botswana and Lesotho. Although the government publicly condemns South Africa's racial policy and grants asylum to political refugees, it forbids refugees to engage in subversive activities against their white-ruled countries. Except for the weak modernist opposition parties, this policy is accepted within the country whose population identifies itself as Swazi, not African, and considers Africans from other countries to be foreigners with different interests.

As has been the case with Botswana and Lesotho, Swaziland's difficult position probably will be accepted by other, less vulnerable African governments. Nonetheless, the country remains an inviting target for the small but recently more active insurgent forces that want staging bases for operations against South Africa and Mozambique.

Outlook

Swaziland enters independence with a government whose power seems secure; it enjoys a developing and healthy economy, and social stability nurtured by tribal homogeneity. Few African countries that have gained independence in the post World War II era have started off better. Nonetheless, the potential for economic and political problems exists. The prospects for continued economic growth after independence depend on government policy toward the economically dominant whites who

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now control a significant share of the nation's wealth and natural resources. Even the conservative Imbokodvo government has already voiced its displeasure with the amount of land in white hands. Moreover, opposition politicians have criticized the light tax burden of whites' concessions which bring in little revenue to the government, and the slow rate of Africanization in skilled and managerial positions.

If the modern economy does continue to grow and to embrace more of the population, familiar social disruptions are likely to occur. These could lead to an expanded base of political support for the modernist opposition and a narrower one for the Imbokodvo.

More immediately, disorganized as the leading opposition may be, 20 percent of the voters supported it in 1967, and they seriously resent the gerrymandering which submerged their urban electoral strength within rural dominated constituencies. Moreover, some friction has de-

veloped between the organizational leadership of the Imbokodvo and its parent body, the Swazi National Council. Although the structural relationship between the two is not clear, the Imbokodvo is developing a political momentum of its own which is likely to increase as its parliamentary leaders acquire the powers of a governing party. Furthermore, conflict within the Imbokodvo seems likely to develop as modernists try to reform the party along progressive lines from within.

King Sobhuza seems to have been successful in maintaining a balance on the side of traditional forces within the Imbokodvo - Swazi National Council oligarchy. The King, however, is old, and his successor probably will not have as much power as Sobhuza, who owes much of his prestige and political influence to his 47-year-long reign. Indeed, the procedure for succession seems somewhat obscure, and a struggle for the kingship among Sobhuza's many children is likely to ensue when he dies.

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